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AMERICAN JAPANESE RELATIONS—A REVIEW

By George Heber Jones, D.D.

A notable book on the above title has been produced by Mr. K. K. Kawakami, the New York correspondent of the *Yorodzu* and is dated 1912, making it the latest utterance on this interesting subject. A perusal of it impresses one with the rapidity with which political alignments are changing in the Far East, for it knows nothing of China's upheaval and is written from the standpoint of a *de facto* Manchu dynasty with Yuan Shi Kai and Tang Shao-i in retirement. It is doubtful, however, if these changes would cause Mr. Kawakami to alter his conclusions as to American-Japanese relations, although they might result in a modification of some statements.

The author tells us that he wrote under a strong sense of duty, "believing that the cloud of misunderstanding between Japan and America which has been growing thicker every day and casting its gloom over the historic friendship of the two peoples, has now reached a stage where its clearing away can no longer be delayed if the two nations are not to be estranged beyond reconciliation." It is questionable, however, if the outlook is as dark as this would indicate. Possibly in some sections of society, both in America and Japan, persons who are the victims of unreliable information and influenced by incendiary and libelous rumors affecting the honor and good will of the two nations have a feeling of estrangement. But even the coolness of two years ago is giving way to better and more sensible views today. Mr. Kawakami, however, felt that the situation calls for heroic treatment, and acting under this sense of urgency he has rapidly sketched the movements and developments of the past few years, giving an inside view of Japan's policies and purposes and placing at the service of the public a valuable array of data.

Mr Kawakami contends that the misunderstanding and disruption in American-Japanese relations center around three principle foci: (1) Manchuria, (2) Korea, and (3) the immigration question. These three topics form the outline of the book, which is written in a lucid and entertaining style and well-worth reading. It is intended to serve as a corrective to the writings of Mr. Thomas F. Millard and Mr. Putnam Weale, for Mr. Kawakami traverses the ground covered by these writers and at times he indulges in censure of the views put forth by them as caustic as anything found in the pages of those doughty champions of anti-Japanese sentiment. This has betrayed him into a stalwartness of utterance which he condemns in others, as in the following:

It is strange that Americans, sagacious as they are, did not long before this awaken to the fact that their sensational vociferations could only recoil upon them and injure their dignity and prestige. While the jingoes and alarmists of this country have been busy chasing the phantom of an American-Japanese war, the little nation across the Pacific has invariably remained serene and equanimous. Never once have the Japanese press and people spoken to you in bellicose tones, but have borne the indignities, to which your whims have subjected them, with perfect dignity and calmness. So far as Japan is concerned, there is absolutely no reason to fear the rupture of amicable relationship between the two countries, for among the forty millions of the Mikado's empire not a single soul is to be found who even dreams of ever taking arms against America. I, of course hazard no prophecy that American interests will never conflict with those of Japan, but I believe that any controversy arising out of such conflict can be and ought to be disposed of in an amicable manner, by mutual restraint, tolerance and concession. It is time that America should conduct herself in a manner that becomes the power, wealth and culture that inhere in her. It is time that Americans should awaken to the grave situation which cannot fail to result if they persist in playing the *role* of a *provocateur*—unless, forsooth, they are really anxious to create a *casus belli*. These are plain words, but I say them in the name of international deportment, peace and amity. (Page 18.)

It is to be regretted that Mr. Kawakami did not more clearly distinguish between the small coterie of "Japanophobists" the real, "jingoes and alarmists" who have, like proverbial stray canines with tin cans attached, been chasing each other through the press, and the great mass of American people, with an ever increasing number of friends of Japan

among them who cannot help paying attention because of the din and clatter created, but who know the true value of such performances. Mr. Kawakami, however, does not claim infallibility for his own conclusions and concedes the possibility of divergence of opinion on the topics discussed. On the whole, his arguments will help to a sane and just estimate of the real situation in connection with Japan's and America's interests in the Far East. In view of the present developments in China we shall confine our review of his thesis to that part which relates to Manchuria.

Mr. Kawakami claims that the impression has been created in America that Japan is "by surreptitious means producing wholesale discrimination against American commercial interests and . . . dealing with China in an overbearing manner, encroaching at every point upon the sovereign rights of the Celestial Empire." Against the political delinquencies implied in this charge, he makes in behalf of his fatherland a vigorous disclaimer and proceeds to show the legal and moral grounds upon which the Manchurian record of Japan stands.

He first directs attention to the supposed invasion of China's sovereignty by Japan in Manchuria and in reply gives in detail the rights, properties and privileges in that region which through the fortunes of war were made over by the Portsmouth treaty to the Sunrise Empire by Russia and confirmed by China in the Komura-Yuan Shi Kai treaty of December, 1905. These consist of (1) the lease of Port Arthur and Tairen and the adjacent territory and territorial waters. This lease expires in 1923, of which, in view of the fact that Russia enjoyed it for seven years, only eighteen years accrue to Japan, unless the term be extended by mutual consent. (2) That section of the South Manchurian Railway running from Tairen to Changchun a distance of 436 miles and three short branch lines covering in all 512 miles of railway, created by Russia at a cost of R 76,222,000. The Chinese government may take over these lines in 1936 on paying the *concessionaire* country all outlays made on them; or if China waits until 1983, being eighty years from the opening of the road in 1903, the railways with their appurtenances revert to China

without cost. (3) The Antung-Mukden Line 189 miles long, the concession expiring at the end of fifteen years, or in 1920. (4) The right to police and exploit a zone fifteen versts wide on either side of the railway. (5) The Yalu timber concession which is now operated by a joint Chinese and Japanese stock company. In addition to these, by the Peking treaty of 1905, Japan secured China's consent to the opening of sixteen cities and towns in Manchuria, which, with five others already opened make twenty-one places for international residence, covering practically the entire Three Provinces and open to all nations as well as Japan. One other railway concession was secured for a line from Kirin to Changchun, penetrating northeastern Manchuria. The Japanese military line from Mukden to Hsinmintun was transferred to China in 1908. China also agreed not to build lines that would compete with the South Manchuria Railway. All these rights and privileges in Manchuria are temporary in character, there being a definite time limit and a modus for the recovery of them by China definitely indicated.

In all her movements and exploitation in Manchuria Japan has kept within the limits of the freedom of action thus conferred upon her, although, as Mr. Kawakami says, this freedom has been grudgingly conceded by China.

I have stated that at the Peking Conference Japan made several important concessions in favor of China. She had fought China's battles as much as she had fought her own, sacrificing countless lives and spending hundreds of millions of dollars, and yet the Manchu Government did not hesitate to deny her a few railway concessions which she was fully justified in claiming. Not only this, but the Chinese diplomats opposed and disputed Japan's demands at every point. They seemed to have forgotten that had not the doughty islanders taken arms against the Northern Colossus, Manchuria, with its area of 370,000 square miles and its 8,500,000 population, would have permanently been lost to China, which in turn might have paved the way to the not impossible dismemberment of the hoary empire. I confess that it was one of the weaknesses common to humanity which caused the Japanese to presume that China would not ignore the appalling sacrifices they had made on behalf of the latter. And who could blame Japan? Disinterested she was not when she declared war in the name of the "open door" and the territorial integrity of China, for in this age of business and materialism, what nation can be so chivalrous as to jeopardize its own welfare and even existence from purely altruistic motives? At

any rate Japan ought not to be accused of selfishness and mercenary motives if she did expect China to recognize her claims ungrudgingly—claims which were ridiculously modest as compared with the gigantic concessions and privileges which some Western powers extorted from the Peking government in consequence of the killing of a missionary or some untoward incident of like nature. I have it upon good authority that it was Japan's earnest desire to settle all matters, which had awaited adjustment between her and China, without recourse to diplomacy but in a friendly manner. Had this desire been gratified, Japan might have cast her lot with China and exercised all her influence for the regeneration of the decaying empire, and for the maintainance of its integrity against foreign aggression. But China's attitude throughout the entire sessions of the Peking Conference was one of willful ingratitude and irreconcilable arrogance, and she tried to defeat Japan's aim by dint of diplomatic *finesse*, in which the mandarins excel the Japanese. Yet the Japanese envoys remained lenient and patient, and made many important concessions in favor of China, thus hoping to convince the Chinese of Japan's sincere wish for the welfare of their country. (Page 34.)

Summing up this phase of the subject, Mr. Kawakami points out that while Russia obtained her gigantic railway concessions in Manchuria by "bullying or wily diplomacy" the cost to Japan has been so enormous that she is driven to keep on playing the game in the hope of winning back what she has been losing. Japan's railway holdings in Manchuria meant a loss of one hundred thousand lives and Y 2,000,000,000, which constitute the cost of a mighty war upon which she staked her very existence. In the face of such an appalling sacrifice, the writer contends that Japan has a right, so long as she conforms to the principle of the "open door" to operate her railways so that the proceeds may assist in lightening the financial burdens under which she struggles because of this war. And it is regarded by Japan as hardly in harmony with the precedents of international intercourse and good understanding for a friendly power to interfere with her in realizing what she thus insists are legitimate aims. Having assumed responsibility in Manchuria, Japan has not shrunk from the obligations involved and has to her credit a list of achievements, in behalf of the welfare of the land, including railroad and mining developments, new towns, opening up of communication, increase of trade, establishment of helpful institutions and many other public and pri-

vate enterprises. In other words, having at enormous cost established stable control, order and prosperity in Manchuria it is difficult for the Japanese to understand why suspicion and misunderstanding of her action in Manchuria should have been created among the people of a friendly power like America.

In explanation of this Mr. Kawakami thinks that the present cabinet of Mr. Taft, under the leadership of Mr. Knox, is acting in obedience to the imperialistic tendencies in America today moving forward under the whiplash of commercialism. Mr. Kawakami says:

America had already been inclined to play fast and loose with her traditional policy of isolation. The annexation of Hawaii was the first step toward her political and economic expansion in the Pacific and beyond. Then came the occupation of the Philippines, and with it was tolled the knell of those happy days when American statesmen and people content with the enormous wealth which nature showered upon them, harbored no idea of territorial expansion. The call of empire had been heard, and the great Republic responded to it with booming of cannon that flashed from Admiral Dewey's flagship in Manila Bay. Once her traditional policy was so radically altered it was but natural that American statesmen, if not the people, should keep their eyes intently fixed upon the Orient. As the years rolled by, it became evident that the American nation came definitely, if unconsciously, to embrace imperialism, which is at once the glory and nemesis of modern times. The voice of imperialism is no voice of humanity; rather it is the gospel of commercialism and self-aggrandizement, and the imperialism of America is no exception to the general rule, however anxious some Americans may be to have us believe that American activities in the Philippines and China are perfectly disinterested. It is the animating desire to become great among the nations, to be respected in the council of the powers, to consolidate her foot-hold in the Far East, to secure markets for the products of her ever expanding industry—it is this desire which impels America to greater and greater activities in the Orient. (Page 62.)

This cause undoubtedly is operative, but it is questionable whether it really enjoys the importance Mr. Kawakami would assign to it. It is certainly re-enforced by other causes which for the time being may be more potent than imperialism, such as the appeal made to America by the new Chinese nationalism under such leaders as Yuan Shi Kai and Tang Shai-i, who have never been friendly to Japan and Russia in

Manchuria. This phase is referred to in a very interesting chapter on Chinese diplomacy in Manchuria.

As one reads the chapters in which Mr. Kawakami outlines this *impasse*, it becomes clear that American interest in Manchuria, encouraged by China in the desire to introduce forces which will restrain Russian and Japanese developments, has brought the American Republic into tension with Japan. Since this book was written, developments have arisen which indicate that this tension can be greatly relieved if the Six Power Loan can be established upon a satisfactory basis.

As to the contention that Chinese control has been superseded the conclusion which one must reach on reading Mr. Kawakami's statements is that Chinese sovereignty in the railroad belts of Manchuria is nominal rather than real, and that all those political enterprises which usually emanate from a sovereign government come, not from China, but from Japan, and in a less degree from Russia. This, however, in Mr. Kawakami's thought, does not constitute an encroachment, for the right to thus act has been conceded by solemn treaty stipulation to Japan by China. Neither is it surreptitious, but frank, open and above-board, working in the long run for the benefit of all concerned.

Turning to the charge that Japan is practicing wholesale discrimination against American commercial interests in Manchuria, Mr. Kawakami first undertakes to discover what those interests were before the war. He claims that they consisted in a growing trade in sheetings, drills, piece goods, flour, oil and tobacco. The growth of this trade has now been checked and the responsibility of this set-back is laid at the door of Japan. It is in this damaged commercial interest that Mr. Kawakami would find the real animus in the American feeling in regard to Japanese advances in Manchuria. American commerce hoped to benefit largely after the Island Empire had driven out the Russian Bear, but these hopes have been disappointed, and the lion's share of the trade has gone to Japan.

Mr. Kawakami freely admits the truth of this statement, but calls attention to the fact that this is true in regard to the

trade of other nations as well and is due to the operation of the ordinary laws of trade. The "open door" policy could not but result in this. Some people apparently so interpret the "open door" policy as to constitute it a ball and chain upon the progress of Japan, binding her to ignore and suppress her own interests in order that commercial opportunity might be given to other nations. If this is what the "open door" policy means commercially, then Japan certainly does not propose to adhere to it, but if the "open door" means that all nations, Japan included, are equally entitled to exploit the markets and resources of Manchuria, then Japan has held to it from the first and by methods unimpeachable. It is to this end that she has subsidized her steamship lines, sent commercial agents to study Manchurian markets, opened commercial museums in the trade centers and used every legitimate method to increase her trade. She has only done what America or any other nation would have done in her place and her success has been due simply to the natural advantages which she enjoys over all competitors. (1) Geographically she has in all trade relations with Manchuria the advantage of the "short haul" with its cheapening of the cost of transportation. (2) She has abundance of cheap labor which enables her to undersell her rivals. (3) She is the chief customer for Manchurian products which fact enables her to enter into intimate relations with native traders and consumers, encouraging the exchange of trade and the increase of trade relations. This is an item of no small importance, as will be seen in the following illustration. The chief product of Manchuria is beans, the annual crop amounting to 1,000,000 tons, valued at \$25,000,000. The movement of this crop determines trade supremacy in Manchuria, as far as the inhabitants are concerned. Japan is the only nation that has use for the products of this crop, and therefore is a great customer as well as a great seller to the Manchurians. (4) Japanese settlers and visitors give Japan a vast army of commercial agents who boost her trade. They live among the people continuously, and, as a rule, learn to speak the language. They are inexpensive, go everywhere and certainly get closer to the native life than is the case with Europeans and Americans.

With these and other advantages in her favor, it is easy to see that Japan in the sale of those articles which she elects to handle can have no successful rival commercially in Manchuria. It is these things which America is up against and which have worked to America's disadvantage, as they have contributed to the supremacy of Japanese commerce. There are other lines of trade, however, which Mr. Kawakami thinks it would be well for America to press the development of, and in which she could enjoy the supremacy, particularly in the matter of machinery and of railway materials. In these things Japan is no rival of America, although German and Russian concerns have entered into competition, pushing their interest skillfully at a time when the political and popular attitude of America toward Japan has reacted to the benefit of these rivals. Anyone familiar with the increase of cordial relations between the Japanese and the German, Russian and French communities in Japan itself, must realize that there is a commercial significance to this which it is unwise for America to ignore.

Russia is the chief rival of America in the trade in flour in Manchuria, endeavoring to find an outlet for her enormous milling interests at Harbin. Germany is also pushing her Sumatra oil as a rival to American Standard Oil. In tobacco America, through the British-American Tobacco Trust, is holding its own. The sum of the whole matter, as far as American commercial interests are concerned, is that in the commercial rivalry which the changed conditions have produced between Japan and America in Manchuria, Japan has won out in obedience to legitimate causes against the operation of which no just criticism is possible. As for the charges of unjust discrimination against America in the matter of freight rates and customs handling, Mr. Kawakami dismisses them as baseless slanders not worth a moment's consideration. Japan enjoys the supremacy in the commercial exploitation of Manchuria and proposes to maintain it, expecting that the treaty powers will adjust themselves to the situation. There seems to be no other way in view of the principles, forces and equities involved. Mr. Kawakami acknowledges that this must have its influence upon the historic intimacies of Japan. He says:

We realize that when once we begin to take away the Chinese trade of western nations, the latter will cease to be effusive, sympathetic and cordial toward us. But that is one thing we cannot help. We are poor, our natural resources are limited; we cannot grow wheat and corn, raise hogs and cattle and "live on the fat of the land," as you of great America can; no one has made us a handsome bequest so that we might live comfortably without worrying about the tomorrow. And like all poor families ours is increasing with embarrassing rapidity—such is the irony of fate. What will become of our ever-increasing children if we do not manufacture and export as best we can? If we entice away your customers by underselling, that is no fault of ours. It would be unreasonable—worse, it would be cruel—to condemn the man who lives by the honest sweat of his brow without in the least violating the dictates of justice and honor. Japan's case in Manchuria is the case of the poor man who is forced to toil hard and practice strict economy. If the western world cannot tolerate Japan's commercial advance in Manchuria simply because its pockets come into the reckoning, no more can Japan afford to stay home idle in order that the western nations shall have all the chance they want. (Page 139.)

From this very incomplete review of Mr. Kawakami's statements, it will be seen that Japan is thoroughly convinced that she is not transcending her legal or moral rights in Manchuria. The problem is, how to cause these conditions and circumstances to become a matter of popular knowledge. The Governments of Japan and America are in the most cordial relations. As to the feeling of estrangement between the peoples of the two countries Mr. Kawakami is disposed to emphasize this more than the present circumstances appear to demand. As a matter of fact, it is perhaps not claiming too much to say that the Manchurian question between America and Japan is historic rather than real, and all difference of opinion has become merged in the larger question of the fate of the Chinese nation. It is sincerely to be hoped that the peoples of Japan and America, who are endowed with such enormous potencies for good or evil, shall renew with increased ardor, and in the light of the new conditions in which each finds itself, the old time intimacy and understanding. The present is a critical time in the history of the world, and in view of the remarkable evolution through which the Chinese people are passing, cordial understanding between America and Japan is of the highest importance to the maintenance of peace in the extreme East.